United Nations A/73/487

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 November 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Agenda item 15
Culture of peace

Letter dated 22 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As you are aware, the Sixth Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions was held in Astana on 10 and 11 October 2018. Delegations from 45 countries of the world, comprising religious leaders, as well as heads and representatives of various international organizations, stressed the importance of cooperation to overcome intolerance, discrimination, exclusion and conflicts based on ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences.

I would be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and the attached Declaration of the Sixth Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions (see annex) as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15.

(*Signed*) Kairat **Umarov**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Kazakhstan to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 22 October 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General*

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English and Russian]

Declaration of the Sixth Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

Astana, Kazakhstan, 11 October 2018

We, the participants of the VI Congress — representatives of world and traditional religions, heads of states, heads of international organizations united by a common aspiration for peace, harmony and constructive cooperation for the sake of prosperity of all mankind,

expressing deep appreciation of and gratitude to President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev for a valuable and praiseworthy contribution to promote dialogue, peace, security and harmony among our peoples and States,

demonstrating their deep gratitude and consideration to the people of Kazakhstan and its Government for their generous hospitality,

recognizing the unique contribution of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the promotion and the conservation of peace through dialogue between religions and civilizations to create a world without conflict for new generations,

welcoming the fundamental role of the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions as a particular global platform for the development and strengthening of inter-religious and inter-civilizational dialogue,

expressing commitment to the Declarations adopted at the previous five Congresses of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions,

affirming the importance of preserving religious and cultural diversity richness for human civilization,

stressing the importance of cooperation between leaders of world and traditional religions with State and public institutions seeking to promote peaceful coexistence of peoples and States through dialogue and the promotion of shared human values,

noting the special role of governments, as well as of governmental and non-governmental, national and international organizations, and the mass media in promoting the ideals of mutual understanding and peace between States, societies and peoples,

relying on the significant historical experience of peaceful coexistence and interaction of multi-confessional societies, representing universal pillars of the world civilization,

emphasizing the special importance of adhering to the spiritual guidelines for cooperation to overcome intolerance, discrimination, exclusion, tensions and conflicts based on ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural differences,

realizing that charitable actions, compassion, mercy, commitment to the ideals of justice and peace would bring much more benefits to people and States than military confrontation,

* Issued in the languages of submission only.

supporting the efforts of political leaders aimed at an immediate settlement and solution of military conflicts and to avoid bloodshed in various regions of the planet,

condemning in the strongest possible terms the continuation of grave, systematic and massive abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by international terrorist organizations, and the support and/or sponsorship of terrorism that undermine mutual trust and cooperation among followers of different religions and among followers of the same faith,

rejecting all forms of manipulation of religion in political conflicts, and of national belonging as well as the claims of exclusivity,

considering the problem of foreign terrorist fighters returning home or moving elsewhere as a new global challenge for all States as they counter religious extremism and international terrorism,

affirming the commitment to high ethical standards, the commonality of our aspirations, and maintaining mutual respect and trust for the sake of security, stability, prosperity of all people,

welcoming the intention to continue convening the meetings of the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan — Astana,

We commit ourselves to:

1. to promote in every possible way the involvement of the leaders of world and traditional religions in making greater efforts to achieve long-term stability and to prevent violent incidents caused by hatred and intolerance.

2. to strengthen cooperation of religious leaders with international institutions, Governments and public institutions as a key instrument for the successful implementation of vital recommendations and programs aimed at comprehensive security in the world.

3. to render every possible assistance to all societies and peoples, irrespective of race, religion, belief, language and gender, in ensuring the inalienable right to a peaceful life.

4. to respect equal rights and freedoms of all citizens regardless of racial, linguistic, religious, national, ethnic, social background, wealth, birth or other status, and act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood.

5. to support initiatives seeking to promote interreligious and interfaith dialogue, which is a fundamental goal of the international community in its commitment to build a just and conflict-free world.

6. to express solidarity with all religious groups and ethnic communities that have suffered human rights abuses and violence by extremists and terrorists.

7. to support all efforts aimed at protecting refugees, their rights and dignity, as well as providing them with necessary assistance.

8. to call upon politicians and world media to renounce associating terrorism with any religion, as this is false and offensive to our religions and harmful to peaceful coexistence, which undermines mutual trust and cooperation within and among different religious communities.

9. to support all efforts aimed at preventing any attempt to fragment society on religious, racial or ethnic grounds.

10. to call upon religious leaders to promote the values of peace, mutual understanding and respect in the media, social networks and public meetings.

11. to make every possible effort to prevent any provocation and violence in places of worship and holy sites of all religions, including Jerusalem, a holy city of all the Abrahamic religions.

12. to support institutions and initiatives that view interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an effective means to build a just, peaceful and responsible civil society.

13. to support the establishment of Nazarbayev Center for interfaith and intercivilizational dialogue in a recognition of outstanding contribution of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to global efforts to foster peace and harmony.

14. to reject the misinterpretation of religious teachings and the defamation of religious values as tools for spreading the ideology of extremist and terrorist organizations.

15. to encourage traditions of peace-building, strengthening of mutual understanding among the followers of world and traditional religions, and resolution of conflicts, existing in world and traditional religions, and to implement them in practice.

16. to promote among representatives of our religious communities the idea of the necessity of peaceful coexistence among leaders of all faiths.

17. to facilitate and participate in implementing effective measures with regard to foreign terrorist fighters returning to their countries of origin as part of deradicalization and rehabilitation programs.

18. to promote interreligious dialogue, mutual respect and harmony at national, regional and international levels.

19. to facilitate rapprochement of different civilizations and religions as the cornerstone of human coexistence.

20. to assist States and political leaders in analyzing and exploring the root causes of religious extremism and international terrorism.

21. to call upon Governments to revitalize the work with the youth to prevent their radicalization.

22. to promote the recognition of appeals by prominent world religious leaders as the voice of wisdom.

23. to convene VII Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in 2021 in the city of Astana, the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

We appeal to all people of faith and of good will to be united during this difficult time and to assume their responsibility in ensuring peace and harmony on our planet.